"IRISH MESSENGER" SERIES

MINIATURE LIVES OF IRISH SAINTS

(Patrons of Irish Dioceses)

by

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MINIATURE LIVES OF IRISH SAINTS

PATRONS OF IRISH DIOCESES.

2nd January.—St. Munchin, Maincin, Patron of Limerick.

ST. MUNCHIN, patron of Limerick, was abbot of the great monastery and school of Mungret, where there are said to have sometimes been as many as fifteen hundred monks. Towards the end of his life this saint seems to have retired in order to live in greater seclusion, and built the cell and oratory known as Cill-Munchin, round which the city of Limerick afterwards grew up. Few details are known of his life of sanctity. Even the time of his death is uncertain, but it may probably be placed between the years 500 and 550.

19th January (in Cashel, 8th January).—St. Albert, Ailbeirt, Patron of Cashel.

ST. ALBERT is patron of Cashel, because for some time a Bishop of that territory. He soon resigned his see, however, to become a wanderer for Christ. With his brother Erhard and some companions he travelled to Germany and afterwards to Rome. From Rome he went alone to the Holy Land. He came back to Ratisbon, hoping to join his brother, but only found his new-made grave. Kneeling by it, he prayed that his own days might be shortened. His prayer was heard, for death came soon, and the two Irish saints, Albert and Ergard, sleep side by side in distant Ratisbon.

Albert and Erhard are probably either names given these saints when they had gone abroad, or are German forms of their Irish names. What these names were we do not know.

31st January.—St. Aidan or Edan, Aodán, Aodan, Patron of Ferns.

Also called MAIDOC. Maodóg.

ST. AIDAN came of the ruling family of Brefney, and in boyhood was a hostage at the court of Tara. Feeling called to the religious life, he studied at Clonard and afterwards with St. David in Wales. From the latter place he crossed with some monks to the Wexford coast. It is told that the sound of Aidan's bell, as the boat drew near the land, changed

the heart of the chieftain of that district, and instead of plundering these strangers, as was his custom, he received them with kindness, and, being converted, gave Aidan the site for his first church at Ardamine. The saint founded thirty churches in this district, having for builder and architect the famous Goban Saor. His greatest church was that at Ferns, where a site was given by King Brandubh in thanksgiving for a miracle worked in his favour. He died about 625.

1st February.—St. Brigid, Brigid, Patroness of all Ireland.

St. Brigid was born A.D. 450 at Faughart, Co. Louth. Having received the religious veil from St. Macaille, she founded convents in many parts of Ireland. All these were subject to her own great convent at Kildare, which soon became the centre of an ecclesiastical city, with its own bishop, its cathedral and schools. The wood of St. Macaille's altar became, at the touch of Brigid's hand, as fresh and green as when it grew in the forest. The butter and milk in her father's dairy, when she worked there as a child, often increased at her prayer that she might have more to give to the poor. Her miracles while at Kildare were very numerous, and she had also the gift of prophecy. Before death, in 521, she appointed St. Darlugha to succeed, but foretold that she would only survive her for a year. Holy Viaticum was given her by St. Ninnidh, as she foretold him when he was only a boy.

St. Brigid is called the Mary of Ireland for her great love for modesty and for the pre-eminence in sanctity above all the women of the Gael.

6th February.—St. Mel, Méal, Patron of Ardagh.

St. Mel, first Bishop of Ardagh, was a nephew of St. Patrick, his mother being St. Darerca. It would seem, however, that he did not come to Ireland until 450, the year of St. Brigid's birth; for we read that, meeting the latter's mother, he foretold the child's future fame and sanctity. It was he who afterwards gave Confirmation to St. Brigid, and he was also present at her religious profession. He ruled the church and monastery of Ardagh as bishop and abbot, but he died some years before St. Patrick.

5th March.—St. Ciaran, Ciaran, Patron of Ossory.

St. Ciaran Seir, though born in Ireland, was baptized and also consecrated bishop abroad. Returning to Ireland, which was then wholly pagan, he made some converts in his native district of Cork and afterwards journeyed into the

heart of the country. At Seir, in the present county of Offaly, his bell sounded miraculously, indicating that this should be the scene of his labours and the site of the first monastery in Ireland. The legends tell of wild beasts coming to help him in building his cell and of others becoming obedient to his rule; but not less wonderful was the influence of his teaching and example in converting the rough people around him. St. Ciaran reached a great age. He had returned to Ireland before St. Patrick's coming, but he lived to meet the other Ciaran and Brendan and Enda and Colmcille at Clonard.

17th March.—St. Patrick, Pádraig, Apostle and Patron of all Ireland.

St. Patrick, having been brought as a slave from Britain or France into Ireland, spent six years of his boyhood tending swine upon the hills of Antrim for a pagan master. Having escaped from captivity and reached his home, he heard in vision the voice of the Irish calling him back to preach the Gospel. After long years of study and preparation he was consecrated bishop, and, with the blessing of the Pope, St. Celestine, he returned to Ireland. He laboured here for sixty years, preaching, baptizing, and founding churches in nearly every part of the country. He preached before King Loeghaire at Tara. He baptized King Aengus of Munster in his palace at Cashel, while in Connacht he converted seven princes and twelve thousand people. On Cruachan (or Croagh Patrick) he spent a whole Lent in prayer and fasting, and wonderful are the favours he obtained from God during that time. He founded the church and school of Armagh about 450; but it was at Saul, in Down—the site of his earliest church—that his death took place in 492 (or, according to others, 465). His grave is at Downpatrick, and there also rest the bodies of SS. Brigid and Colmcille.

24th March.—St. Macartan, Mac Cairtinn, Patron of Clogher.

St. Macartan is spoken of as the strong man of St. Patrick's household, and it was one of his duties in the course of their missionary journeys to carry the apostle on his shoulders across the rivers and the rough roads. When he had grown too feeble for this task, he was appointed bishop and abbot over the church of Clogher, which he ruled till his death, 506. As a mark of esteem, St. Patrick gave him the staff he himself had used in his journeys, and also some precious relics in a silver case which is still preserved. St.

Macartan had great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and his church in Clogher was dedicated to her. He was meek and kindly in disposition, much given to penance and to prayer.

18th April.—St. Laserian, or Laisren, Lairse, Patron of Leighlin.

Also called Molaise. Molaise.

St. Laserian was born in Ulster and educated in Iona. Declining the chieftaincy to which his kinsmen had elected him, he went to Rome, where, after some further years of study, he was ordained by Pope Gregory the Great and commissioned to return to Ireland. At Leighlinn, on the banks of the Barrow, he entered the monastery of St. Gobban, who soon after resigned the abbacy in his favour. St. Laserian made another journey to Rome in connection with the question of the date of Easter, which was then much discussed. He was received by Pope Honorius and by him consecrated bishop. Returning to Ireland, he ruled the church and monastery of Leighlinn till his death, about 639.

27th April.—St. Asicus or Assan, Assan, Patron of Elphin.

St. Asicus was placed by St. Patrick over the church and school of Elphin. He was a skilled worker in metal, and made altars and patens and book-covers for many churches. After a time he fled for solitude to the little island of Rathlin O'Beirne. At the end of seven years his monks, having discovered his retreat, prevailed on him to return with them to Elphin, but he died upon the journey and was buried at a little church near Ballintra in Donegal.

10th May (in Kildare, 3rd May).—St. Conleth, Conlaod, Patron of Kildare.

St. Conleth lived as a hermit at Old Connell near Newbridge, till at St. Brigid's request he was consecrated bishop and associated with her in ruling and directing the various convents throughout Ireland that looked to her as their superior. He was noted not alone for his sanctity, but for his skill and taste in metal-work and decorative writing. These arts, as well as the science of virtue, he taught to many disciples at the school of Kildare. He is said to have set out for Rome in the year 519, but died before he left Ireland. He was buried on the left of the High Altar at Kildare—the right being reserved for St. Brigid.

14th May.—St. Carthach, Cartac, Patron of Lismore.

Also called Mochuda. Mocuda.

St. Carthach or Carthage was a native of Kerry, and when a boy entered the monastery of his namesake and countryman, St. Carthach the Elder. In later years he built his own monastery at Rahan, in Meath, where, under his care, a community of 840 monks served God and helped the poor. After forty years of quiet useful labour here, he was unjustly driven from his monastery and banished from Meath. Travelling southward with his monks he came to the Decies, and there founded what was afterwards the famous school of Lismore. In 637, only two years after his coming here, he was one day being carried from his own cell up to the monastery, when he saw in vision the heavens opened and a ladder reaching down. Being laid upon the ground by his own request, and having received the last sacraments, he bade farewell to all his monks.—Then the vision was made true.

16th May.—St. Brendan, Breandan, Patron of Kerry and of Clonfert.

St. Brendan is called the foster-child of St. Ita, having spent his infancy under her pious care. His first monastery was in the Dingle peninsula, where his own cell and oratory, on the very summit of Mount Brandon, looked out over the boundless sea. The great waste of waters—a mirror of God's immensity—filled him with a strange longing to travel and explore. With fourteen monks he set out in his currach, and for seven years—so the legend runs—they sailed away to the west, meeting many marvels on their way, till at length they reached a beautiful and fertile land, where an angel bade them go back and tell the wonders they had seen. After this journey Brendan had many disciples and founded many monasteries, among which Ardfert, Inchiquin on Lough Corrib, and Clonfert, are the most famous. He also visited Iona and preached along the Scottish coast. He died May 15, 577, at the nunnery of his sister, St. Briga, at Annaghdown, and he was buried in Clonfert.

3rd June.—St. Kevin, Caoimhgin, Patron of Glendaloch and Dublin.

St. Kevin, lest he should be elected abbot by his brother monks at Kilnamanagh, fled from them in secret to the lonely valley of Glendaloch. Here for seven years he led a life of prayer and penance in complete solitude. His shelter was a

hollow tree, and his scanty rest was taken on the bare rock-floor of a tiny cave high in a cliff over the lake. Yet his life was not lonely—he saw God in the great works of His hands, and the birds used perch upon his shoulders and sing their sweetest songs to him. In time his retreat became known, and disciples flocked around this wondrous man of God; then, in obedience to an angel's voice, Kevin regretfully left that lonely spot and at the mouth of the valley he founded what soon became the great monastic city of Glendaloch. He ruled as abbot over the church and monastery here for nearly eighty years, till he died on 3rd June, 618, at the age of 120.

6th June.—St. Jarlath, Iarlaith, Patron of Tuam.

St. Jarlath was a disciple of St. Benen, and was ordained by him at his monastery of Kilbannon in Galway. Not far from this, at Cluainfois, Jarlath founded his own monastery, where, among his pupils, were St. Brendan and St. Colman of Cloyne. Brendan foretold that he should move further to the east and build his church where the wheel of his chariot broke. Fulfilling this prophecy Jarlath built his great monastery at Tuam and lived there till his death. It has been said of St. Jarlath that prayer and sacred study were his chief food. He loved watching and meditation, so that his whole life was one continual prayer.

7th June.—St. Colman or Colmog, Colmán, Colmóg, Patron of Dromore.

St. Colman of Dromore, born in Co. Down, received his early training from St. Caylan, Abbot of Noendrum, and afterwards spent some years of study at St. Ailbe's school at Emly. Having been ordained priest he returned north, and, on the advice of St. MacNisi, founded, about 570, a religious house at Dromore on the Lagan—a spot which St. Patrick had long before pointed out as the site of a future monastery. While directing a large community here, St. Colmog was also bishop of the surrounding district, now represented by the diocese of Dromore. He is said to have spent some time at Psalterstown, Co. Louth, but whether before or after going to Dromore is uncertain. The many miracles related of him show the great sanctity of his life. The year of his death is not recorded.

In a list of 1,100 Irish Saints to be found in the *Book of Leinster*, not less than 228 bear the name Colman.

9th June.—St. Colum, Colmcille or Columba, Colmcille, Secondary Patron of all Ireland.

ST. COLMCILLE was of royal blood—his father was chief of the O'Donnells, his step-uncle Ard-righ of Eirinn—but he knew that his kingdom was not of this world, and in early manhood we see him visiting the great schools to study the Scriptures and other sacred knowledge, and to perfect himself in the practice of sanctity. Having been ordained priest, he founded at Derry the first of the many monasteries that became subject to his rule. Later, in penance for the part he had in causing the battle of Culdreimhne, he went to the little island of Iona, off the Scottish coast, where for thirty years he spent a life of prayer and labour, varied sometimes by missionary journeys into Scotland, and by one visit to Ireland when public interest required it. He died 9th June, 597, on the altar-steps of his church in Iona—a fitting death-bed for him who was called Colmcille (Colm of the Church), because, even as a boy, he was to be found so often in prayer before the tabernacle.

Colmcille's heart was fired with a great love for God and a passionate love for Ireland. We should ask him often to kindle in our hearts a love like his.

9th August.—St. Nathy, Naithi, Patron of Achonry.

ST. NATHY was born in Co. Sligo, his birth and future greatness being foretold by a saintly hermit named Cormac. Like so many other saints, he was a disciple of St. Finian of Clonard, and it was the latter who, by a miracle worked in his presence, moved the prince of the district to grant St. Nathy a site for his church and monastery at Achonry. Here St. Nathy lived and taught till a great age. Among his disciples were St. Fechin of Fore, and St. Kevin.

9th August.—St. Felim (Phelim), Feidlimid, Patron of Kilmore.

ST. FELIM, patron of Kilmore, had five brothers, Senan, Manchin, Caillen, Dega, Dermot, and one sister, Femia, all of whose names are numbered among the saints. Loving solitude, he sought out a lonely spot by the shores of Lough Oughter, and there built an oratory. This was afterwards replaced by a church, which, from its size, gave its name to the district, Kilmore. Felim is said to have been a disciple of St. Colmcille and to have been placed by him in charge of this district, where he spent many years instructing the people and perfecting himself in the ways of virtue. The year of his death is uncertain.

12th August.—St. Muredach, Muireadach, Patron of Killala.

St. Muredach is said to have been placed by St. Patrick over the church of Killala. This church the apostle greatly loved because it was near "the wood of Fochlut by the western sea," from which the children in his vision cried to him to "come back and walk amongst them." St. Muredach after a time, it would seem, resigned the see, and seeking a life of greater solitude, ended his days on the island off the Sligo coast, still called from him Inismurray.

Another St. Muredach was bishop of Killala about the year 580, when he was present at an assembly convened by St. Colmcille at Easdara in Sligo. More probably it is this saint who is honoured as patron of Killala, but we know no details of his life.

14th August.—St. Fachanan or Fachtna, Fachtnan, Patron of Ross and of Kilfenora.

St. Fachtna, patron of Ross, was trained in childhood by St. Ita, and later by St. Finbarr. He lived for a time, with some disciples, on the little island of Darinis, near Youghal. Leaving this he founded, on a wooded promontory, in his native district, the school that soon got the name of Ross-Alither, from the crowds of pilgrim-students that flocked to it from many parts of Europe. While teaching here, St. Fachtna became totally blind, but, in answer to prayer, his sight was after a time restored to him. He died at the age of 46, but the year of his death is not certain.

St. Fachtna is also patron of Kilfenora. While this may be another saint of the same name, of whose life no incidents are recorded, it is more probable that the same St. Fachtna is patron of both dioceses, though his connection with Kilfenora is obscure.

23rd August.—St. Eoghan or Eugene, Eogan, Patron of Derry.

St. Eoghan, while a boy at Clones, was taken captive to Britain, but, being set free through the intervention of St. Ninnian, became a pupil of this saint at his school at Candida Casa. Taken captive a second time he was carried to France, but a miracle worked in their favour moved the king to set him and his two companions, Tighernagh and Corpre, at liberty, and again they returned to St. Ninnian. After some years the three saints, Ninnian, Tighernagh, and Eoghan, came to Ireland, where all three founded monasteries. Eoghan's first settlement was at Kilnamanagh, in Wicklow, where he lived for fifteen years, numbering among his

disciples his nephew, St. Kevin of Glendaloch. Going northwards, under divine guidance he founded his monastery at Ardstraw, in Co. Tyrone, where he lived till his death, about the year 580.

3rd September.—St. Macanisius or Macnisi, Mac Nisse, Patron of Connor.

St. Macnisi was the pupil of St. Olcan of Armoy, but while still a youth he became one of St. Patrick's own disciples. After he had been consecrated bishop by the apostle, he founded a church and monastery at Kells or Desert-Connor, in Co. Antrim, which became the centre of the diocese of Connor (afterwards, in 1442, united with that of Down.) He had also here a home for the sick and aged, and he is said to have miraculously changed the course of the river that flowed near, lest its noise should disturb their sleep. He died at Connor about 514. This saint's full name was Aengue MacNisi or MacNessa, but he is best known by his surname, which he derived from his mother.

9th September.—St. Ciaran, Ciaran, Patron of Clonmacnois.

St. Ciaran Mac an tSaoir was born in Roscommon. He went in early life to the school of Clonard, where he was greatly loved both by his master and his fellow-students. After some years Finian offered to resign and place the school under his direction, but Ciaran went instead to Aran, to subject himself to Enda's rule. Soon, however, he felt called to guide others in the way of holiness. As he sailed away from Aran Enda blessed him with many tears and bade him build his monastery near the Shannon and in the centre of Ireland. He foretold, too, that all Erin would be filled with Ciaran's name and many men be fed by his prayers and fastings. This prophecy was fulfilled when Clonmacnois became the greatest school and monastery in Ireland. But Ciaran only ruled it for four months. He spent four months building it and four as its abbot, and died at the sacred age of 33. Ciaran was humble, chaste and mortified; but it was his gentle, kindly manner that made him so much loved by all the other saints. "Gentle, loving, tender-hearted, is Ciaran Mac an tSaoir."

12th September.—St. Ailbe, Ailbe, Patron of Emly.

St. Ailbe, though born in Ireland, was ordained and consecrated abroad. Coming back he landed on the Ulster coast and founded a church at Kilroot, in Co. Antrim. Having

preached in many parts of the country he was led by an angel to Emly. Here he met St. Patrick, and was established by him in this see. A school grew up around the church of Emly, and among its pupils were St. Colmog of Dromore and St. Nessan of Mungret. The year 527 is given as the date of St. Ailbe's death; but if, as is generally believed, he came to Ireland before St. Patrick, he can scarcely have lived so late.

23rd September.—St. Eunan or Adamnan, Aḋamnan, Patron of Raphoe.

St. Eunan is noted for his famous Life of St. Colmcille. Like his patron, he was born in Donegal. Having studied at several of the Irish schools he went to Iona and was, received into the community there. After thirty years he was appointed Abbot of Iona, and thus because superior over all the Columban houses in Ireland and Scotland. He came to Ireland several times to visit the various monasteries; he also exerted during these visits much influence in political matters and the making of laws. He is spoken of as virtuous and learned; he was proficient in Greek and Hebrew, but specially skilled in Sacred Scripture. The last seven years of his life were spent in Ireland, but he returned to Iona to bless his monks before he died in 704.

25th September.—St. Finnbarr, Finnbarr, Patron of Cork.

St. Finnbarr began his missionary life at an early age and was the founder of many churches. One of his first monastic settlements was at Gougane Barra, in Co. Cork. Here, on an island on a small lake overshadowed by mountains, the site of his cell and churches can still be seen. Finnbarr loved this lonely spot, well suited for a hermit's life, but, following the divine call, he soon left it to his disciples, while he himself went forth to found new churches for God's honour. His most famous monastery was that built at an unfrequented spot by the river Lee, around which there grew up later the city of Cork. Finnbarr ruled for seventeen years as abbot and bishop of this monastery and diocese. He died at Cloyne, where he had gone on a pilgrimage about the year 630, but his body was taken to Cork for burial.

11th October.—St. Canice, Cainneach, Patron of Kilkenny.

St. Canice, born in Derry, studied for a time in Wales, and afterwards with Finnian and Mobhi at Clonard and at Glasnevin. In his student days he was noted especially for his prompt obedience. He spent some time at Iona, and sometimes, accompanied by St. Colmcille and St. Comgall,

preached with much success in Scotland and in the Hebrides, where his name is still used and honoured. Returning to Ireland he founded several monasteries in Meath and in Ossory, the most famous being those at Kilkenny and at Aghadoe. From the latter he often retired to the solitude of an island in a lake or swamp near Roscrea. He was frequently visited by other saints, and it was from St. Fintan of Clonenagh that he received the Last Sacraments at his death, 14th October, 560.

25th October.—Blessed Thaddeus, Tadhg, Patron of Ross, Cork, and Cloyne.

Blessed Thaddeus was only twenty-seven when, in 1485, he was appointed by Pope Sixtus IV as Bishop of Ross. He met with much opposition, however, when he came to his diocese and was obliged to go to Rome to defend himself from false charges made against him by his enemies. After two years of sorrow and humiliation his character was completely vindicated, while the patience with which he bore his trials gave proof of his eminent sanctity. Transferred to the important diocese of Cloyne and Cork (they were then one), fresh troubles awaited him and he was obliged to go again to Rome for help and counsel. His mission accomplished, he turned homewards, but died at the little town of Ivera, in the Alps, where his relics and his memory are revered.

27th October.—St. Otteran or Oran, Odhran, Patron of Waterford.

St. Otteran, spurning, like so many others of his time, the worldly honours to which his noble birth entitled him, left his home in Ireland for the monastery of his kinsman, Columba, at Iona. After some years as a simple monk, he was raised to Holy Orders, and laboured not only to perfect himself but to lead others forward in the knowledge and love of God. He died in Iona, and for centuries it was counted the high privilege of kings—Irish, Scottish, and Danish—to be buried near his grave in Reilig Oran. He was chosen as patron by the Danes of Waterford when, on their conversion, the city was constituted a diocese, about 1100. The saint lived in the sixth century.

29th October.—St. Colman, Colman, Patron of Kilmacduagh.

St. Colman Mac Duagh, even from early years, practised much fasting and bodily mortification. From the solitude, in which for seven years he had allowed himself no companion

but the boy who served his Mass, he was called, much against his wishes, to rule the church and monastery named after him, Kilmaedhagh. After some years of wise and pious rule, he resigned his bishopric and fled to a mountain valley near Kinvarra, where, hidden from the world, he might give all his thoughts to God. Here he died, full of merit and famed for his miracles, sometime after 625.

3rd November.—St. Malachy, Maolmaodog, Patron of Armagh, Down and Connor.

St. Malachy, while yet a young man, adopted the hermit's life of solitude and prayer. He was ordained by the Primate, Celsus, and afterwards, to perfect himself in sacred learning, he spent some years under Malchus at Lismore. On his return to the North he restored the monastery and school of Bangor, and laboured strenuously and with success to restore in this district the religious spirit that had been broken by the Danes. On the death of Celsus he became Archbishop of Armagh, but after six or seven years, during which he completed the work of reform begun by his saintly predecessor, Malachy resigned the Primacy and retired again to Bangor. He was twice sent to Rome as representative of the Irish bishops, but on his second journey he died at St. Bernard's monastery at Clairvaux, on the 2nd November, 1148.

Six years before his death St. Malachy founded at Mellifont the first Cistercian abbey in Ireland.

14th November.—St. Lorcan or Laurence, Lorcan, Patron of Dublin.

St. Lorcan or Laurence O'Toole became at the age of twelve a novice in the monastery of Glendaloch. On the death of the Abbot Dunlaing, in 1153, he was unanimously elected to succeed him, and, though only twenty-five, he was by nature and grace eminently fitted for the position. After nine years as Abbot of Glendaloch he was called to be Archbishop of Dublin, and was consecrated by the Primate Gelasius in Christ Church Cathedral. Under the bishop's robes he still wore the coarse hair shirt and while he placed rich banquets before his guests, he himself took nothing but the simplest fare. He rose at night to chant the Office, and the Lent he spent in Glendaloch, not in the monastery, but in St. Kevin's cave in the mountain cliff—alone with God. St. Lorcan took an active part in resisting the Norman invaders, and it was while on an embassy from Rory O'Connor to Henry of England that he died at Eu, in Normandy, on the 14th November, 1180.

24th November.—St. Colman, Colmán, **Patron of Cloyne.**

St. Colman was a youth of brilliant talents, and so excelled in the arts of poetry and music that he was ranked among the bards of the king of Cashel. St. Brendan, at St. Ita's suggestion, urged him to devote his gifts to the service of God, and together the two youths went to the school of St. Jarlath, where Colman made such progress in sanctity and learning that he was soon ordained priest. Returning to the South, he founded the church of Cloyne, and for many years he laboured for God's glory and founded many churches in the district around. He was able, too, to turn his literary gifts to God's service, and wrote many poems on sacred subjects. He died about the year 600.

12th December.—St. Finian, Fionán, **Patron of Meath.**

St. Finian of Clonard, after labouring and teaching for a time in his native district of Carlow, was led by an angel to a desert place near the Boyne, in Co. Meath. For a time Finian lived alone here—his bed the bare ground, his food some coarse bread, with herbs and water—but soon the fame of his sanctity spread and many persons came to visit him, while the heavenly wisdom of the instructions he gave them, led even those who were already advanced in knowledge and holiness to enroll themselves among his disciples. Bishops left their cathedrals and abbots their monasteries to profit by Finian's example and hear his interpretation of the Sacred Scripture. So he earned the title of Tutor of the Saints of Ireland, and Clonard became one of the greatest of the schools of Ireland, having sometimes as many as three thousand students. Finian laboured here for over thirty years and died about 552.

18th December.—St. Flannan, Flannan, **Patron of Killaloe.**

St. Flannan was son of a king of Thomond. He became a disciple of St. Molua, whose church near the Shannon gives its name to the diocese. It is told that when on one occasion night overtook him as he worked in the monastery mill, a heavenly light of great brilliancy enabled him to complete his task. Hearing of this and other miracles worked in his favour, St. Molua resigned his church to him. Having journeyed to Rome Flannan was consecrated bishop by Pope John IV, about A.D. 640, and returning, he governed the diocese of Killaloe in wisdom for many years. In his zeal he found time to visit Aran and to preach in other islands of the coast; while for his prayer and constant fasting he was much honoured by the other saints of Ireland.

There are added here the lives of a few who, though not patrons of Irish dioceses, rank high among the Irish Saints, and who, though (with one exception) their lives were largely spent in foreign lands, are not unmindful of the land that bore them, nor of us its children.

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The following Saints though not Patrons of Dioceses are added because of their importance.

16th January.—St. Fursey, Fursa.

St. Fursey's childhood was spent under the protection of St. Brendan and his successor, St. Meldan, near Lough Corrib. In this district he built his own cell later, and gathered disciples round him, but feeling called to be a wanderer for Christ, he left this place and made a missionary journey through many parts of Ireland. Afterwards, crossing the seas, he spent some years in England, where he converted many unbelievers and strengthened converts in their faith. Leaving his two brothers, Foilan and Ultan, in charge of the monastery he had founded, he himself pursued his journey through France to Rome. Having visited the tombs of the Apostles and been received by the reigning Pope, Fursey returned to France, where, favoured by the king and by many noble families, he laboured till his death, about 630 or 660.

Many miracles are attributed to him. His staff drew water from the rock, his prayer made the harvest ripen quickly to avert a famine. But he is noted most of all for the visions that were granted him.

21st March.—St Enda, Éanna.

St. Enda, a chieftain of Oirghialla, was converted from a worldly life by his sister, St. Fanchea. Under her direction, having lived for a time in the monastery which he built at Killany, on the borders of Louth and Monaghan, he went to the school of Rosnat, in Britain, to perfect himself in sanctity. He was ordained in Rome, then returning to Ireland he preached and founded churches in the neighbourhood of Drogheda. He soon set out, however, to make his home and monastery in the distant isle of Aran. Many disciples followed him, till the island was occupied by ten monastic settlements under his supervision. He spent fifty years in Aran before his death in 540. Nearly all the great saints of those days went to visit and to learn from him. Brendan and Jarlath and Ciaran, even the great Colmcille and Finian " the

tutor of the saints," sought lessons in holiness at Enda's island-home, while round his grave at Killeany one hundred and twenty-seven saints await the resurrection.

10th May.—St. Cathal (Cataldus), Cathal, Patron of Taranto, Italy.

Cathal, born in the neighbourhood of Thurles, was a student and afterwards professor in the school of Lismore. About 670 he was made Bishop of Rachan, which was probably in the Decies, though the place cannot now be identified. After some years he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and on the homeward journey was shipwrecked on the Italian coast, not far from Taranto. He soon recognized the will of Providence, that, instead of returning to Ireland, he should labour here among the Tarentines, who were without a bishop, and had, many of them, relapsed into paganism. The blessing of Mary, to whom he had ever a tender devotion, crowned his preaching with success, and before his death, in 687, he had re-established Christianity in the city and surrounding districts. In the Cathedral of Taranto his relics, in a precious shrine, are still held in honour by a grateful people.

8th July.—St. Killian, Cillín, Patron of Wurtzburg, Germany.

Killian was born in the northern half of Ireland and spent a time as monk and priest in Iona. Feeling called to a missionary life, he journeyed to the Continent, and from the Irish monastery of Bishop Florence, in Strassburg, went on to Rome. Pope Conan, having consecrated him bishop, commissioned him to return to Germany and preach in the neighbourhood of Wurtzburg. His preaching here soon bore good fruit. Among others he converted and baptized the Duke Gospert, but he thereby incurred the enmity of Geilan his wife. So embittered was she against the new religion and its practices that she had the holy bishop and his companions secretly put to death. Fifty years later—about 746—the relics of these martyrs—Killian, Colman, and Totnam—were discovered and enshrined in the beautiful church at Wurtzburg, where they are still venerated.

16th October.—St. Gall, Gall, Patron of St. Gall, Switzerland.

Gall left Bangor about 589 with St. Columban, and for more than twenty years shared in his journeys and his labours. Only an attack of fever prevented him from accompanying

his master when the latter went from Bregentz into Italy, but in this was the hand of Providence. When his strength returned, Gall founded another monastery in a lonely spot in the mountains, now marked by the city called after him, St. Gall, and here he lived for thirty years till his death in 645. In spite of the various dialects in which he had to address his hearers, he was an eloquent and successful preacher. In his zeal for truth he burned the pagan temples at Zurich and smashed their idols at Bregentz. Along with the truths of faith he taught many useful arts—fishing, net-making, fruit-growing, while in later times the school of St. Gall was famous for its music.

27th November.—St. Feargal (Virgilius), Feargal, Patron of Salzburg.

FEARGAL was famous as an astronomer not less than a theologian. After being for a time abbot of Achabo he went to France with a few companions about 741. He spent some time at the court of Pepin before going on to Bavaria, where, seconding the labours of St. Boniface, he converted many to the faith of Christ. Being appointed Archbishop of Salzburg, he continued to labour for the conversion of unbelievers, while he ruled his own flock with the love and care of a father. He built and restored many churches. In one of them, which he made his cathedral, he enshrined the relics of his countryman, St. Rupert, the founder of the See of Salzburg.

28th November.—St. Columban, Patron of Bobbio, Italy.

COLUMBAN, with twelve companions, set out from Bangor about 589 to preach the Gospel on the Continent. In Burgundy he spent twenty years, and by word and example won many souls to Christ. Incurring the enmity of the Queen, he was driven from his abbey of Luxeuil, and forced with his Irish monks to take shipping for Ireland. A storm, however, prevented the voyage, and the little band were put ashore again at Nantes. We find them next, at Metz, then, along the Moselle and the Rhine, they came to Switzerland. Four fruitful years were spent among the pagans on the lake shores of Zurich and Constance, then Columban left his abbey of Bregentz in charge of Eustace—one of the twelve who had come with him from Ireland—and crossed the Alps to Italy. After a short stay at Milan he founded, in 614, his last monastery, at Bobbio, and a year after its founding his body was laid to rest within its walls.

Prayer in honour of All the Saints of Ireland

from the Mass of All the Saints of Ireland

Sumus.

Méaduiġ, a Tiġearna, do ġrása ionainn, ar ċaiteam dúinn go h-áṫasaċ féile naoṁ uile ár dtíre, ó's sinne a ġcineál féin ar talaṁ, go bfaġmuid a luaċ saoṫair ar Neaṁ, tré Íosa Críost ár dTiġearna.

LET US PRAY.

Multiply Thy grace, O Lord, in us who celebrate the feast of All the Saints of our Island; that we who rejoice in being their fellow-countrymen on earth may deserve to share in heaven the glorious freedom which by their good works they have purchased. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

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